



REQUEST FOR Proposals (RFP)
NYS Tourism RTW Covid-19 Grant Relief Program – Third Party System Administrator

Release Date: January 21, 2022

NYS Tourism RTW Covid-19 Grant Relief Program – Third Party System Administrator

Q&A

Table with 3 columns: No., Question, Answer. Contains 4 rows of Q&A entries regarding ESD tech stack, program framework, demo requests, and UX development responsibilities.

No.	Question	Answer
5	<p>Are we [the respondent] the payment processor? Are we holding the money? Will we receive the full \$125 million of capital upfront? And be responsible for dispersing the funds to approved applicants? OR...Will ESD send us the funds on a per applicant basis? Page 3. III Scope of Work</p>	<p>The selected vendor will identify or build the payment processing system. Upon execution of an agreement between ESD and the selected vendor, funds will be disbursed in tranches to the selected vendor in accordance with the agreed upon disbursement terms. As the programs progress, and in consultation with ESD, the selected vendor will make payments directly to applicants with the funds previously received from ESD.</p>
6	<p>What does ESD marketing rollout look like? Will they be hosting live or virtual Q&As? Page 4. B. Respondent Expectations</p>	<p>ESD will be responsible for planning and managing the marketing rollout of the Programs. The selected vendor will not need to conduct any marketing activities.</p>
7	<p>What's the current payment structure with similar like-minded grants? Monthly subscription? Fee or commission?</p>	<p>Please see response to Question #5.</p>
8	<p>What system functionality will ESD provide?</p>	<p>ESD will be responsible for the system functionality in ESD's prescreening and application portals. Prescreening, application processing, document management and review works flows will take place within ESD's systems.</p>
9	<p>Do you have a workflow for the existing portal/system that you can share?</p>	<p>Please see response to Question #2.</p>
10	<p>Does the ESD system include the application workflow and review process?</p>	<p>ESD will provide training to the selected vendor. Final eligibility determinations and payments to applicants will be made in consultation with ESD.</p> <p>For workflow charts, please see response to Question #2.</p>



No.	Question	Answer
11	If ESD is providing the review system, will the vendor be able to pull reports from the system?	Yes – the vendor will be able to pull reports from the system.
12	If the vendor is responsible to providing the backend review system/workflows, how will data be provided from the ESD portal to the vendor’s system?	A mutually acceptable process will be worked out between ESD IT and the selected vendor.
13	Will ESD provide the review procedures? Or will the vendor develop the procedures?	Yes – ESD will provide review procedures, and the selected vendor will execute these procedures in reviewing applications. Refinements to this process can be considered.
14	Will ESD provide training or will you train the trainer?	Yes – ESD will provide training to the selected vendor.
15	Is call center/customer care to handle inbound calls in scope? If yes, what are the hours of operation and what languages need to be supported?	No – ESD will not expect the selected vendor to have a call center. However, ESD will expect the selected vendor to respond to applicants via email with any questions related to the application process.

No.	Question	Answer
16	<p>Can you please clarify which of the technology components will be provided by ESD and which ones will be provided by the Respondent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application intake portal • Case management system (e.g., to review applications, track application status, identify applications for award, and calculate award amounts) • Document management (e.g., to upload documentation required by applicants and for reviewers to access as part of their review) • Payment processing platform (e.g., to mechanically transfer funds to the applicant via electronic or paper disbursement) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application portal will be created by ESD. • The document management for the application portal will be created by ESD. • The review of applications will be conducted by the selected vendor, with ESD providing consultation in determining final eligibility, final award amounts, and any other issues that may arise. • The payment processing system will be identified or built by the selected vendor.

No.	Question	Answer
17	<p>Clarification on various references to 3rd party references across the RFP: The RFP makes several references to “Utilize a program application intake portal developed by ESD”, “Work within the application framework built by ESD to Accept all Program application material”. Other areas within the RFP also refer to “Build a platform, or leverage an existing 3rd party platform, to disburse Program funds to awarded Program applications”, “Import required data from ESD application portal into the disbursement and tracking system built or leveraged by the 3rd Party.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can ESD please clarify whether the 3rd party platform referenced is one provided by ESD, or is the Respondent expected to identify its own 3rd party platform? • Can you please provide details on the current business and technical capabilities of existing platform(s)? Which software platforms are they built on? • Can you please clarify business and technical capabilities expected of the “disbursement and tracking system built or leveraged by the 3rd party”? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The selected vendor is expected to identify or build a 3rd party platform to utilize for disbursements. • The portals are based on Microsoft SharePoint and all SharePoint functionality is included. • The selected vendor will maintain Security Requirements and IT deliverables as it pertains to the project.

No.	Question	Answer
18	<p>Clarifications on ESD SaaS application portal: The RFP notes that the “Respondent is expected to administer program grants using a cloud-based SaaS application portal developed by ESD. This portal will be used to process applications, vet the grants for eligibility criteria provided by ESD and disburse grants.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can ESD please provide more details on the SaaS platform used and the current business and technical capabilities of the platform? • Will the ESD application portal be ready by March 2022 for the respondent to start administering both programs? • How will the Respondent access the ESD built application portal? • Are there integrations/interfaces to other systems that will need to work with this application portal? • Does this application portal have the capability to generate documents/documentation and manage e-signatures if needed for this process? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The portals are based on Microsoft SharePoint and all SharePoint functionality is included. • Yes – the application portal will be ready by March 2022. • The selected vendor will be assigned access to the ESD Portal SharePoint site. • No – there will not be integrations/interfaces to other systems that will need to work with this application portal. A mutually acceptable process will be worked out between ESD IT and the selected vendor. • Yes – the application portal has the capability to generate documents/documentation and manage e-signatures.

No.	Question	Answer
19	<p>Technical Platform Flexibility and Performance: The evaluation requires a detailed narrative how the technology platform will be used for all grant administration functions and how it will handle up to 300,000 applications with the necessary security.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What technology platform is this response requirement referring to - is this in reference to the payment processing platform in Appendix F; the above referenced existing ESD platform; or a case management system that either exists with ESD or is expected to be provided by the Respondent? 	<p>The 300,000 application figure in the RFP is a mistake. We anticipate the volume for the Return to Work program not-to-exceed 15,000 applications, and the volume for the Made in New York program not-to-exceed 3,000 applications.</p> <p>Regarding payment processing, please see response to Question #5.</p>

No.	Question	Answer
20	<p>Payment processing platform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you please clarify what the business and technical capabilities are expected of this platform? • How will this payment processing differ from the SFS payment processes that other State agencies have used to handle payment process/grant distribution? • Can you please clarify whether the ESD built SaaS application portal has a payment processing/grant distribution platform? And whether the Respondent is expected to build or leverage a 3rd party solution (versus interfacing with or customizing existing platforms)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESD IT only requires that the selected vendor maintains Security Requirements and IT deliverables as it pertains to the project. • ESD will submit a voucher request through SFS for each payment to the selected vendor in accordance with the disbursement terms in the agreement. The selected vendor will not submit voucher requests through SFS for individual disbursements to grantees. The selected vendor will be expected to submit regular reports to ESD regarding the disbursements made to grantees. A mutually acceptable process will be worked out between ESD and the selected vendor for data sharing and reporting. • No – the selected vendor is expected to build or leverage an existing disbursement / payment platform.
21	<p>Applicant support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the Respondent be required to handle real-time live voice support to applicants? If so, is there a telephonic system the respondent is expected to use and how will it be accessed? 	<p>Please see response to Question #15.</p>

No.	Question	Answer
22	<p>Program timelines per Appendix F: Please confirm ESD does not expect to make any payments/grants distribution awards prior to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October 2022 – Return-to-Work • February 2023 – Meet in New York • If ESD expects payments to the grant recipients to be disbursed earlier than the dates above, can you share those target dates? 	<p>Confirmed for the Return to Work program.</p> <p>For the Meet is New York program, payments are expected to be dispersed to awarded applicants as early as late May 2022. As such, the hope is that a payment platform would be in place by the end of April 2022. Please see the Appendix F addendum for a timeline of both programs.</p>
23	<p>Application review process timeline Respondent Expectations notes that respondents should “have an application review process ready by early March,” and anticipated contract start date is February 28th. Can ESD provide clarification around the expectations for establishing review processes by early March? (e.g., will ESD be providing a review process and policies for for the Respondent to implement, or will the Respondent be responsible for reviewing the portal functionality and application requirements to establish a review process?)</p>	<p>ESD will provide training for the expected review process and will provide an overview of our expectations to the selected vendor.</p>
24	<p>Clarifications on Appendix B deliverables: Some deliverables are noted as “mandatory” while others are not – can you please clarify which deliverables are mandatory and which are optional, or pending final solution?</p>	<p>If stated as mandatory, it is mandatory. Other deliverables are required as applicable to the project and final proposed solution.</p>